DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 254 JC 810 509

AUTHOR Staatse, Holly
TITLE Educational Intent Survey, Spring 1980.
INSTITUTION Mercer County Community Coll., Trenton, N.J.
REPORT NO MCCC-TR-80-04
PUB DATE May 80
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences; Black Students; Community Colleges; Females; Full Time Students; Males; Part Time Students; *Student Educational Objectives; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students; White Students

ABSTRACT

Each semester since Spring 1978, students registering for courses at Mercer County Community College (MCCC) have been asked to respond to questions related to their primary educational goal, certainty of that goal, plans for achieving the goal, and intention to return to MCCC the following semester. In Spring 1980, 7,425 students registered for classes; 70% of these students completed the questionnaires. Responses were cross-tabulated with information about students' full-/part-time status, ethnicity, sex, and age. The survey revealed that 44% of the students were attending MCCC for preparation for a job; 25% were interested in obtaining transfer credit; 16% wanted to improve their skills for their present job; and 12% were taking courses for personal interest. Most of the students (78%) were definite about their goal. More than half of the students (66%) planned to complete an associate degree; 24% intended to take selected courses; and 5% planned to complete a certificate. Most (69%) planned to return to MCCC the following semester. The study report describes the background of the study; examines the differences between full- and part-time students, between black and white students, among age groups, and between male and female students; and compares Spring 1980 and Spring 1979 data. (AYC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

TECHNICAL REPORT
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Report #80-04

ED205254

EDUCATIONAL INTENT SURVEY
SPRING 1980

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. David Conklin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

HOLLY H. STAATSE
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
MAY 1980

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JC 810 509

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	1
Background	1
Data Analysis for Spring 1980 Survey	2
Introduction	2
Full-time and Part-time Students	2
Ethnic Status	4
Age Groups	6
Responses by Sex	8
Conclusions	8

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
1	Goals by Part-Time/Full-Time Status	3
2	Goals by Ethnic Status	5
3	Goals by Age Group	7
4	Goals by Sex	9

EDUCATIONAL INTENT SURVEY - SPRING 1980

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Educational Goals of Mercer Students

Almost half (44%) of Mercer students are here for preparation for a job to be obtained. A quarter are here to obtain transfer credit. Two-thirds intend to get a degree (34% for full-time students and 54% for part-time).

Three quarters of full-time students and two-thirds of part-time students expressed an intent to re-enroll in Mercer in the fall of 1980 when they registered for their spring course(s).

Other

Some differences exist between full- and part-time students (see Table 1), between black and white students (see Table 2), between age groups of students (see Table 3), and between male and female students (see Table 4). Educational Intent data changed little between spring 1979 and spring 1980, and on the whole over the past two years, has remained rather stable.

II. BACKGROUND

The Educational Intent Survey is conducted at registration by the Office of Institutional Research with the cooperation of the Office of Registration and Student Records. The data collected from this survey have been used for these purposes:

a) to more accurately portray the variety of educational goals amongst and between students;

b) to project enrollments;

c) to refine and limit the survey population of non-returning students (i.e., excluding students who expressed no intent to return); and

d) to enable the College to identify those students who had changed their goal in order to determine any patterns of change for particular groups.

The survey initially began during the registration for spring of 1978; data from the survey was put onto the Registration File but not the Student History File. Data has been collected through mail registration and, as frequently as possible, at registration at extension sites, e.g., senior citizens centers, as well as in-person registration at the James Kerney and West Windsor Campuses. Because of various difficulties including low response rate for students who register by mail, and logistical problems at extension sites and at in-person registration, the response rate has never exceeded 70 percent. This figure is sufficient, however, to enable OIR to examine trends and to make general statements about student goals.

The survey will be discontinued following registration for the fall 1980 semester as sufficient data will be available to make longitudinal comparisons and additionally, information on two of the questions, educational goals and degree intent, will continue to be available for those students who take the Basic Skills Placement Test (BSPT).

III. DATA ANALYSIS FOR SPRING 1980 SURVEY

A. Introduction

Approximately 7,425 students registered for classes in spring 1980; 5,187 students completed surveys (70% response rate). Responses to the survey's four questions were cross-tabulated with other information about each student, such as full-time/part-time status, ethnicity, age and sex. Comparisons are made to the data collected for spring 1979 in this report.

B. Full-time and Part-time Students

The responses to the questions differ greatly for part-time and full-time students (see Table 1). The part-time students' primary educational goals are widely distributed: 38% have a primary goal of "preparing for a job to be obtained," 24% to "improve skills for present job," 18% for "personal interest" and 16% to "transfer credit." The full-time students' opinions, however, tend to cluster; 54% choosing "preparation for a job to be obtained" and 37% "transfer credit."

TABLE 1: GOALS BY PART-TIME/FULL-TIME STATUS

	Spring 1979			Spring 1980		
	Part-time N=3067	Full-time N=2222	All N=5285	Part-time N=3081	Full-time N=2106	All N=5187
1. What is your PRIMARY educational goal in attending this college?						
Improvement of skills for present job	23%	5%	15%	24%	4%	16%
Preparation for a job to be obtained	34%	53%	42%	38%	54%	44%
Transfer Credit	18%	36%	25%	16%	37%	25%
Personal Interest	20%	4%	14%	18%	3%	12%
Other	5%	2%	4%	4%	2%	3%
2. How definite are you concerning this educational goal?						
Definite	76%	81%	78%	78%	80%	78%
Fairly definite	21%	18%	20%	20%	19%	20%
Not at all definite	3%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
3. Do you plan to:						
Take selected courses	37%	11%	26%	34%	10%	24%
Complete an Associate Program	53%	81%	65%	54%	84%	66%
Complete a Certificate Program	4%	5%	4%	6%	4%	5%
Other	6%	3%	5%	6%	2%	5%
4. Will you be returning to MCCC next semester?						
Yes	67%	74%	70%	66%	73%	69%
No	9%	16%	12%	7%	16%	10%
Uncertain	24%	10%	18%	27%	11%	21%

On their plans, part-time students say they are attending Mercer County Community College to "complete an associate degree program" (54%) or just to "take selected courses" (34%). However, full-time students come mainly to "complete an associate degree program" (84%).

A smaller percentage of part-time students (66%) indicated that "yes, they will return next semester" than the full-time students (73%). Yet, the percentage of part-time that said "no, they will not return" was smaller than the full-time. A much higher percentage of the part-time students are "uncertain" about their returning.

C. Ethnic Status

When evaluating the responses to each question by ethnic status, we have considered only the subgroups of white students and black students because the sample sizes for Hispanics, Orientals, American Indians and foreign students are too small to make valid generalizations (see Table 2).

Between 1979 and 1980, white students increased their choice for "preparation for a job to be obtained" from 42% to 46%, black students still chose this response slightly more, increasing from 46% to 48%. The second favorite response is "transfer credit". The percentage of white students choosing this response did not change much (27% in 1980) but the black students increased their intention to "transfer credit" from 23% to 28%. Significant decreases from 1979 to 1980 were "personal interest," for white students, and "improvement of skills for present job" for black students.

Black students are notably more definite about their goals than white students (87% blacks; 77% whites; spring 1980). A much higher percentage of blacks (79% in 1980) plan to "complete an associate program than whites (70% in 1980). The percentage of white students planning to "take selected courses" has decreased (26% in 1979, 22% in 1980) but is still much greater than the percentage of black students "taking selected courses" (11% in 1980).

The responses to "returning next semester?" look as though black students intend to return more so than white students; this may be due to the fact that a higher percentage of black students are full-time and, therefore, would tend to have a better return rate because of their full-time status.

TABLE 2: GOALS BY ETHNIC STATUS

	SPRING 1979						SPRING 1980					
	W[1] (4020)[2]	B (767)	H (119)	O (68)	AI (15)	F (41)	W (3455)	B (688)	H (111)	O (61)	AI (16)	F (39)
1. What is your PRIMARY educational goal in attending this College?												
Improvement of skills for present job	15%	17%	14%	13%	33%	2%	14%	13%	18%	25%	7%	8%
Preparation for a job to be obtained	42%	46%	45%	28%	40%	51%	46%	48%	50%	38%	66%	36%
Transfer Credit	26%	23%	20%	31%	13%	27%	27%	28%	22%	31%	0%	38%
Personal Interest	13%	9%	18%	22%	13%	17%	10%	8%	7%	3%	20%	18%
Other	4%	5%	3%	6%	0%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	7%	0%
2. How definite are you concerning this educational goal?												
Definite	78%	83%	71%	70%	80%	78%	77%	87%	77%	77%	81%	77%
Fairly definite	20%	16%	26%	23%	20%	22%	21%	11%	22%	20%	19%	23%
Not at all definite	2%	1%	3%	7%	0%	0%	2%	2%	1%	3%	0%	0%
3. Do you plan to:												
Take selected courses	26%	11%	21%	38%	20%	10%	22%	11%	10%	36%	12%	15%
Complete an Associate program	65%	80%	69%	49%	80%	75%	70%	79%	80%	46%	88%	74%
Complete a Certificate program	4%	5%	7%	9%	0%	10%	4%	7%	9%	10%	0%	8%
Other	5%	4%	3%	4%	0%	5%	4%	3%	1%	8%	0%	3%
4. Will you be returning to MCCC next semester?												
Yes	70%	79%	77%	61%	86%	85%	70%	80%	84%	72%	79%	80%
No	12%	9%	8%	5%	7%	5%	12%	7%	4%	5%	12%	10%
Uncertain	18%	12%	15%	34%	7%	10%	18%	13%	12%	23%	19%	10%

[1]White, Black, Hispanic, Oriential, American Indian, Foreign

[2]Number in parenthesis is the sample size upon which the percentages were based.

D. Age Groups

The age group 21 and younger, indicated their primary goal as "preparation for a job to be obtained" (51%), and "transfer credit"(36%) (see Table 3). In each of the other age groups, the percentage selecting the above two responses progressively decreases to 34% for "preparation for a job to be obtained," and 10% for "transfer credit" for the 64 and older group[1]. The percentages increase progressively for responses, "improvement of skills for present job" and "personal interest," from 7% of the 21 and youngest group to 28% of the oldest group on "improving skills," and from 4% of the youngest to 24% of the oldest on "personal interest."

The percentage "taking selected courses" increases with the age groups from 14% of 21 and younger to 49% of 65 and older. Decreasing with each older age group is the percentage planning to "complete an associate degree program," 79% of youngest group to 36% of the oldest group.

In comparing the responses to those of spring 1979, we notice an increase in the percentage of students in each age group with a goal of "preparing for a job to be obtained." Increases from 1979 to 1980 are also noticed in plans to "complete an associate degree program." In each age group, the percentages selecting these responses is higher over those of last year. Decreasing was the percentage of students in each age group selecting "personal interest" and "take selected courses."

---

[1]These figures appear to be higher than one would expect. It may be due, in part, to a broad interpretation of the word "job," one that would encompass volunteer work and part-time employment.

TABLE 7: GOALS BY AGE GROUP

	Spring 1979					Spring 1980				
	21 & Younger N=2028	22-25 N=1061	26-35 N=1279	36-64 N=647	65 & Older N=274	21 & Younger N=1828	22-25 N=858	26-35 N=1108	36-64 N=586	65 & Older N=807
1. What is your PRIMARY educational goal in attending this college?										
Improvement of skills for present job	7%	16%	24%	25%	12%	7%	14%	20%	25%	28%
Preparation for a job to be obtained	49%	43%	38%	32%	23%	51%	47%	43%	36%	34%
Transfer Credit	35%	24%	18%	13%	19%	36%	27%	20%	16%	10%
Personal Interest	7%	13%	14%	24%	40%	4%	9%	14%	19%	24%
Other	2%	4%	6%	6%	6%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
3. Do you plan to:										
Take selected courses	17%	24%	28%	37%	64%	14%	19%	24%	32%	49%
Complete an Associate program	74%	67%	64%	54%	23%	79%	71%	68%	56%	36%
Complete a Certificate program	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	6%	4%	6%	7%
Other	4%	5%	4%	6%	11%	3%	4%	4%	6%	8%
4. Will you be returning to MCCC next semester?										
Yes	71%	68%	73%	73%	46%	71%	70%	74%	73%	54%
No	15%	12%	8%	5%	19%	15%	11%	8%	6%	6%
Uncertain	14%	20%	19%	22%	35%	14%	19%	18%	21%	40%

E. Responses by Sex

Since last spring, there has been an increase in the percentage of men and women attending Mercer to "prepare for a job to be obtained," from 36% in 1979 to 41% in 1980 of the men and 48% to 51% of the women (see Table 4). A slight increase happened among the men attending Mercer for "transfer credit," 32% to 34% in 1980, where as for women it was approximately the same (22%, 1980). The decreases occured in "improvement of skills for present job" for the male respondents (17% in 1979, 14% in 1980), and "personal interest" for both the men (12% in 1979, 9% in 1980) and women (13% in 1979, 10% in 1980).

The popularity of planning to "complete an associate program" has shown an increase over the past year for both sexes; the men have increased from 69% in 1979 to 73% in 1980 and the women from 65% in 1979 to 70% in 1980. The response "take selected courses" was a less favored choice than in 1979 with a decrease for the men from 23% to 19% in 1980 and for the women from 25% to 21% in 1980.

"Will you return next semester?" There is very little difference in the way the men and women responded in the spring semesters of 1979 and 1980. However, the women indicate a higher percentage of intent to return next semester and a lower percentage of uncertainity than the men.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Two general conclusions may be reached from the foregoing analysis. One is that students continue to come to Mercer with different educational goals in mind, a rather obvious fact but one worth documenting. Two, the worsening economic picture seems to have affected the goals of students. The data show an increasing percentage of students "preparing for a job to be obtained" and intending to "complete an associate degree program." Accompanying this trend is a decrease in the percentage attending Mercer for "personal interest" and to "take selected courses." In addition, a greater percentage of black students expressed, as their goal, the earning of transfer credit, perhaps indicating a skepticism over the value of a two-year degree in the current economy.

TABLE 4: GOALS BY SEX

	Spring 79		Spring 80	
	Men N=2309	Women N=2769	Men N=1904	Women N=2508
1. What is your PRIMARY educational goal in attending this college?				
Improvement of skills for present job	17%	14%	14%	14%
Preparation for a job to be obtained	36%	48%	41%	51%
Transfer Credit	32%	21%	34%	22%
Personal Interest	12%	13%	9%	10%
Other	3%	4%	2%	3%
3. Do you plan to:				
Take selected courses	23%	25%	19%	21%
Complete an Associate program	69%	65%	73%	70%
Complete a Certificate program	4%	5%	5%	4%
Other	4%	5%	3%	5%
4. Will you be returning to MCCC next semester?				
Yes	71%	72%	70%	73%
No	12%	11%	12%	11%
Uncertain	17%	17%	18%	16%

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
96 POWELL LIBRARY BUILDING
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

SEP 18 1981